

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

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Highlights of the Year

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is not a regulatory agency. To carry out its functions, NCLIS conducts hearings, studies, surveys, and analyses of the nation's library and information needs, appraises the adequacies and deficiencies of the current library and information resources and research and development activities, and issues publications. These activities support the development of policy advice and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

Martha B. Gould continues as chairperson of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. President Clinton made three recess appointments in late December 2000. Paulette H. Holahan, an active library volunteer for more than forty years from New Orleans, Louisiana had served on the Commission from 1980-1985. Marilyn Gell Mason currently a consultant on library issues is the former director of the Cleveland Public Library and was the Director of the White House Conference on Library and Information Service in 1979 and 1980. Donald L. Robinson, now retired, was, when appointed, the Director of the Washington Internship Program of Boston University and coordinator of the Mickey Leland Congressional Internship Program. As recess appointments, the new members served through the first session of the 107th Congress.

Continuing commissioners are Rebecca T. Bingham, Joan R. Challinor, Martha B. Gould, José-Marie Griffiths, Jack E. Hightower, and Bobby L. Roberts. The terms of office of members are five years, except that terms continue until the member's successor is appointed, or July 19 of the year succeeding the year in which the member's appointed office expires. The appointed terms for Commission C.E. "Abe" Abramson, Walter Anderson and LeVar Burton expired on July 19, 2000 and no successors were named; therefore, their extension terms, as provided by law, expired on July 19, 2001. Winston Tabb continues to represent James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, a permanent NCLIS member. Beverly Sheppard, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) served as an Ex Officio member of the Commission until Robert S. Martin was named IMLS director.

Robert S. Willard, a former commissioner, is the NCLIS executive director, and Judith Russell whose library career included time as director of the Federal Depository Library Program is the deputy director. Denise Davis is the director of statistics and surveys. She came to the staff with more than 15 years experience as an academic and public librarian. Rosalie Vlach is the director of legislative and public affairs after many years as a teacher and as the library liaison for an information company.

As part of its responsibility for advising the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on policies and financial assistance for library services, and for ensuring that IMLS policies and activities are coordinated with other activities of the federal government, NCLIS and the National Museum Services Board held several joint meetings. NCLIS established a committee to assist IMLS with development of the National Award for Library Service. The Commission continues its participation in the cycles of draft, guidelines, plans, feedback, reports, evaluation and revision for the federal grants program for libraries and information services from IMLS.

Support for Executive and Legislative Branches

The Commission continues to examine government information policy as it relates to creation, dissemination and permanent accessibility of electronic government information. Among the Commission initiatives during 2001, was the completion and delivery of the report, *A Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination*, recommending policies and procedures for strengthening the dissemination infrastructure of government information. The study of government dissemination policies was undertaken at the request of Senator John McCain and Senator Joseph Lieberman who requested additional issues be included in the study. The report, delivered to the President and to the Congress, was based on historical research, oral and written comments of governmental and non-governmental parties with an interest in the subject, and the recommendations of the four panels of experts.

NCLIS continues to work closely and meet with officials in a variety of federal agencies to obtain information and provide timely input on national and international policies affecting library and information services. During 2001, Commissioners and staff met with officials from the Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce and State as well as the Government Printing Office, Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, National Institute for Literacy, Office of Management and Budget, and Small Agency Council, among others. NCLIS also met with individuals from the Association for Federal Information Resources Management, Federal Depository Library Council, Federal Publishers Committee, Federal Library and Information Center Committee, the Interagency Council for Printing and Publication Services, among others.

National Information Activities

NCLIS published *Library and Information Services for Individuals with Disabilities*. The publication included the edited transcript of the Commission hearing held at the Kellogg Conference Center of the Gallaudet University. After carefully reviewing the information presented at the hearing, NCLIS began considering a research and development initiative on library and information services for individuals with disabilities.

NCLIS examined the status of school libraries in an April hearing in Cincinnati, Ohio. The school library's role in student achievement, and in promoting literacy and information literacy were among the topics examined. The commission also investigated

the role of the federal government in supporting school libraries. The transcript of the hearing, *School Librarians: Knowledge Navigators Through Troubled Times* will be published in 2002.

NCLIS/NCES Library Statistics Program

NCLIS Library Statistics Program collaborative activities during 2001 include the following: Annual training workshop and orientation for new state data coordinators, March 2001; Steering committee meetings for the Federal State Cooperative System survey, March, June and September 2001; State Library Agency survey, March 2001; Academic Library Survey advisory committee meeting, January and June 2001; and School Library Media Center survey task group meetings, January and June 2001.

2001 marked the 14th consecutive year of cooperation between the Commission and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Commission serves as a liaison to the library community, organizes meetings and professional development workshops, supports in-state training and technical assistance, monitors trends, and advises NCES on policy matters related to libraries. NCLIS is committed to providing access to the work of all steering committees and task groups associated with the Library Statistics Program (LSP) through its website. <http://www.nclis.gov/libraries/lsp/statist.html>

NCES and NCLIS continue planning for an expanded library statistics cooperative. The goal is to facilitate work on crosscutting issues without interfering with the ability of existing constituent groups to continue their work on individual surveys. A significant effort during 2001 was the adoption by the State Library Agency survey of core electronic metrics. These measures come from the collaborative work between NCLIS, the Federal State Cooperative System for collection of public library data, State Library Agencies, and consultants John Carlo Bertot, and Charles R. McClure. The State Library Agency survey has adopted core network use measures from that body of work and will begin reporting these with the FY 2001 survey.

In January 2001 NCLIS became the U.S. Designee for submitting U.S. library data to the European Union library statistics project, LibEcon. The project requests annual data and NCLIS officially added the LibEcon project to its Library Statistics Program activities. Comprehensive data was submitted for public, academic and state library agencies for the years 1996-2000 as available. School and national library data will be reported in 2002.

International Activities

The NCLIS and Sister Cities International initiative, *Sister Libraries: a White House Millennium Council Project* was completed in 2001. The initial goal was for public and school libraries in the United States to pair with others worldwide, focusing on programs specifically planned for children and teenagers. The project was expanded to include other types of libraries and a wider variety of programs. One hundred forty three U.S. libraries in 42 states are designated official Sister Libraries.

NCLIS is actively involved in U.S. international library standards activities. The Director of Statistics and Surveys chairs the National Information Standards Organization's Standards Committee Working Group for revision of Z 39.7 Library Statistics Standard. The Director is also one of three experts to the International Standard Organization TC46, SC8, WG2 for ISO 2729 and TC46.SC8, and WG4.

The Commission completed its 16th year of cooperation with the Department of State to coordinate and monitor proposals for International Contributions for Scientific, Educational and Cultural Activities (ICSECA) funds and to disburse the funds.

The Commission continues to be an active participant in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Commissioners and staff represented NCLIS at the August 2001 General Conference in Boston and hosted several meetings with UNESCO representatives on topics of mutual interest. The Commission was an "International Distinguished Partner" with a special role in the preparations for the IFLA Boston conference.

NCLIS began preliminary work in preparation for an International Leadership Conference on Information Literacy planned in partnership with UNESCO and the National Forum on Information Literacy.

Publications

Annual Report 1999-2000. GPO. 2001

Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination. GPO, January 2001

Library and Information Services for Persons with Disabilities An NCLIS Hearing in Washington, D.C. GPO July 2001

Library Statistics Cooperative Program. 2001 (brochure)

Copies of NCLIS print publications are available free in limited quantities from the NCLIS office until supplies are exhausted. Electronic versions are available on the Commission's website. In addition, selected reports, hearing testimony, comments on various matters before Congress and the Administration, news releases, and other items are also on the website. Web: <http://www.nclis.gov>